

Policy for Placement Learning

CONTENTS

1. Introduction and Scope
2. Purpose
3. Policy
4. Supporting guidance and further sources of support

1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 One of the priorities stipulated in the University's vision and strategic plan is the commitment to offer students a '*distinctive set of opportunities [which] will allow our students to reach their full potential and optimise their employability*'. Placement learning plays an important part in realising this ambition. This document sets out the University's Policy on placement learning.
- 1.2 The University defines placement learning as learning that is an integral part of a programme of study, which contributes to the programme's learning outcomes and which normally takes place outside the University, either in the work place or at another institution. This Policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students across the University.
- 1.3 Placements covered under this Policy usually fall into one of the following four main categories;
 - **Academic:** a period of study at a university or comparable institution
 - **Work:** a period including industrial/professional experience, language assistantship, or teaching practice. Either relevant to a student's programme or for them to explore sectors outside their academic discipline(s)
 - **Research:** a project performed in a laboratory or equivalent
 - **Clinical:** work-related learning in a clinical setting, including optional (elective) periods
- 1.4 Placements may vary in length and take place during the normal teaching period, the vacations or both. A placement may be a continuous period e.g., a week or a full year, or extended over a period of time e.g., one day per week for a semester.
- 1.5 This Policy does not apply to fieldwork, work experience undertaken outside of a programme of study, including part-time, term-time or vacation work arranged by students that is not a planned part of the programme or does not contribute to its learning outcomes.
- 1.6 . This Policy is accompanied by the *Guidance for Staff on Placement Learning*.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this Policy is to prescribe the principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery and monitoring of placement learning, to ensure consistency of practice and experience across the University, and to ensure that high quality and standards are being maintained.

3. Policy

The following principles underpin the aims of the University's Placement Learning

3.1. The University has a responsibility towards its students undertaking placements and will take reasonable steps to ensure and evidence that appropriate action has been taken to mitigate risks and that students are adequately supported before, during and after their placement.

3.2. Each School that sends students on placement must make adequate staffing provision for the role of Placement Organiser. Placement Organiser/s must have the required experience, seniority, time and support to fulfil their responsibilities. This role should normally include: approval of placements, ensuring that students are prepared before undertaking a placement, maintaining communication with and support for students throughout the placement, and ensuring that arrangements are in place to re-orientate students on their return to the University.¹ Some of the predeparture activities are supported via central professional services.

3.3. Placements are organised by the University or, with the agreement of the University, the student.

3.4. In their choice of placement provider and location, Schools should adhere to the University's values of humanity which state we will “embrace and celebrate difference, respect and support each other, and act with integrity to benefit society and the environment by transforming and enriching lives.”

3.5. Wherever possible, placements should be paid, unless they are for a not-for-profit organisation and clearly classed as volunteering. Where unpaid placements exist in other sectors, students' expenses should normally be covered by the placement provider.

3.6. All new programmes that include a compulsory or optional credit bearing or non-credit bearing placement must be approved as part of the New Programme Approval (NPP) procedure. Where placements are added to an existing programme, these must be approved by the relevant Faculty using Programme Amendment procedures.

3.7. Where students are undertaking a work placement, all responsibilities of the School (or office within the University) that manages the placement, the Placement Provider, and the student must be made explicit in advance of the placement and clear guidance must be available to all those involved concerning the various phases of placement learning. An agreement must be used to set down the responsibilities of the respective parties and other details about the placement, and the document must be shared between the School, the Placement Provider and the student.

3.8. Placement Providers must be able to offer a placement that meets the agreed aims and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.

3.9. Successful completion of a placement(s) is a requirement of the programme and/or for professional recognition of the award including “a licence to practice”. Marks (including a pass/fail) may be assigned to placements and may contribute to progression and/or the final degree classification. Placements may also contribute towards credit.

3.9.1. For students with disclosed disabilities and/or special educational needs, the student's home School has the responsibility (with support from the DASS) to work with the student and to ensure that any necessary adjustments are put in place to enable the student to succeed on placement. Should the student be precluded from undertaking the standard placement, and where this forms a compulsory part of the programme, reasonable alternative learning experiences which achieve broadly the same intended outcomes should be provided by the School, subject to any alternative direction provided by professional/statutory bodies.

¹ A generic job description for the role will be added in due course.

3.9.2. Where undertaking a placement forms a compulsory part of the programme and involves additional costs to students over and above the normal fees for the programme this must be made clear at application stage and to current students in all promotional materials.

3.9.3. In case of a breakdown of a placement, either by the Placement Provider or the student, the School that manages the placement must always provide adequate support for the students' continuation of their studies as appropriate.

3.9.4. Schools should consider the ongoing appropriateness and effectiveness of placements as part of periodic review and student feedback mechanisms.

3.9.5. For HESA purposes, the University is required to record all placement data lasting four weeks or more in Campus Solutions or My Placement. In addition, for duty of care/emergency management purposes, all activity undertaken off-campus that extends beyond 48 hours needs to be recorded in Campus Solutions or My Placement.

4. Supporting guidance and further sources of support

4.1 The *Guidance for Staff on Placement Learning* supplements this Policy and is available on the [Teaching and Learning Delivery website](#).

Policy for Placement Learning - Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	June 2021	Creation by International Programmes Office and approval by TLSG: Replaced version 2.3 of 'Principles and procedures for student placements on taught programmes'
1.0	February 2022	Policy owner and lead contact details updated in Document control box; reference to TLSD changed to Teaching and Learning Delivery in 4.1..

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Related Procedures and Guidance:	Guidance for Staff on Placement Learning
Policy owner:	Head of Student and Academic Services (SAS)
Lead contact:	Teaching and Learning Manager (Policy), Division of SAS <i>For any queries or questions relating to this document, please direct your email to teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk</i>